

Application No. 09/371,916
Amendment "B" dated July 15, 2003
Reply to Office Action mailed May 9, 2003

REMARKS

Applicants and applicants' attorney express appreciation to the Examiner for the courtesy of the recent interview held on July 8, 2003. The claim amendments made by this paper are consistent with the proposals and discussions made during the Interview.

In the Final Office Action, dated May 9, 2003, claims 1-25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Huang (U.S. Patent No. 6,480,488) in view of Nair¹ (U.S. Patent No. 5,724,356), and further in view of Dai (U.S. Patent No. 5,615,340). Claim 1 was also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The Examiner indicated during the interview, however, that this indefiniteness rejection has been resolved by the proposed claim amendments to claim 1, which were presented during the interview and that continue to persist in the claim amendments presented herein. Accordingly, this rejection is now moot.

By this paper, claims 1, 2, 4, 17, 18 and 21 have been amended and claims 15, 16, 19, 20 and 25 have been cancelled.² Accordingly, claims 1-14, 17-18, 21-24 are presented for reconsideration, of which claims 1 and 21 are the independent claims at issue.

Claim 1 is directed to a method for automatically registering a new communication device with a cable modem, and in such a way as to enable delivery of incoming data packets over a cable network to the communication device only when the incoming data packets include destination addresses that are associated with the registered communication device. The recited method includes various acts that are performed by the cable modem, including an act of receiving an outgoing data packet from the communication device having an address that identifies the device. The cable modem then compares the device address with a list of addresses. If the address is not on the list, it is added, such that the communication device is automatically registered with the cable modem.

¹ The Examiner clarified during the Interview that the reference to Coley was a mistake. In particular, the statement of rejection including "Coley et al (US Patent 6,061,798)" was a typo and should have been replaced with a reference to Parameswaran Nair et al. (US Patent No. 5,724,356). Accordingly, Nair is identified herein, rather than Coley, as part of the rejection. For at least this reason, the teachings of Coley are not specifically addressed in this response. Nevertheless, it will be appreciated that this should not be construed as acquiescing to any purported teaching or relevance of Coley. In particular, Applicant believes that Coley fails to obviate or anticipate the pending claims, either singly or in combination with the other cited references.

² The claim amendments, including claim cancellations, made herein should not be construed as Applicant acquiescing to the purported teachings or prior art status of the art of record, namely, Huang, Dai, Nair, and Coley. Accordingly, Applicants reserve the right to further challenge the purported teachings and prior art status of the art of record, at any appropriate time, should it arise.

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Similarly, when an incoming data packet is received from the cable network, the destination address of the incoming data packet is also compared to list of addresses. When the destination address matches an address on the list, the data packet is allowed to pass to the corresponding destination device. However, contrary to what happens with the outgoing packets, if the destination address is not on the list, then the incoming packet is filtered and prevented from being passed through the cable modem to the destination device.

Claim 21 is directed to a corresponding computer program product having computer executable instructions for implementing the method that is recited in claim 1.

As discussed during the interview, the pending claims are neither anticipated by nor made obvious by the cited art of record. In particular, Huang, Dai, and Nair fail to teach or suggest, either singly or in combination, the claimed invention as presented in the claims.

Dai is directed to an incoming packet controller that receives incoming information packets and determines whether the destination addresses of the incoming packets match addresses stored in an address table. If so, then the packets are sent to appropriate working ports. Otherwise, the packets are prevented from passing to the working ports, thereby eliminating unnecessary signal traffic to the ports. (Abstract).

Nair is directed to a programmable filter for controlling which network users can access a network bridge and for restricting local packet traffic from passing over the bridge to another network. (Col. 2, ll. 16-18; Col. 21, l. 45-Col. 28, l. 10). Nair also discloses a receiving function for the bridge. (Col. 26, ll. 42-45). However, contrary to the pending claims, Nair fails to teach, suggest, or motivate filtering inbound network traffic. Rather, all inbound traffic is transferred to the receiving network without being filtered, assuming the packets transmitted to the network will have the proper format., such that the bridge system will appear totally 'transparent.' (Col. 26, ll.42-64).

Huang is directed to methods and systems for routing data packets within a LAN. (Abstract). Huang is even more specifically directed to port controllers that are utilized in a LAN switch fabric. (Fig. 4, Col 2, ll. 65-66). In this system, source addresses of data packets that are to be transmitted from one terminal to another within the LAN are compared to an address table. (Col. 3, ll. 6-15). The table is refreshed to add addresses that are identified as missing from the table. (Col. 3, ll. 16-20). Thereafter, the new address is sent in a learning

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frame to each of the other port controllers so that they can update their tables. (Col. 3, ll.21-27). This helps to maintain high levels of awareness between the various port controllers.

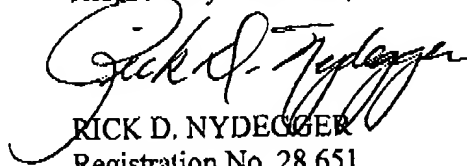
In stark contrast to the present invention, however, Huang explicitly states that if a packet has a destination address (DA) that "cannot be located in the address table, the router 312 will deem the data as a broadcast frame and transmit the data to every port controller." (Col. 4, ll. 35-37). This clearly teaches away from the presently pending claims. The cited references also fail to disclose the environment of a cable network and the use of a cable modem through which the methods of the claims are performed.

Accordingly, for at least these reasons, as discussed during the interview, there is no motivation to combine the references, such that the cited art of record should not be construed as anticipating or obviating the pending claims. Accordingly, inasmuch as it was concluded during the Interview, and as reflected in the Summary, that the pending claims appear to overcome the cited references, Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims (1-14, 17-18, 21-24) are now in condition for allowance.

In the event that the Examiner finds any remaining impediment to allowance of this application that may be clarified through a telephone interview, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney.

Dated this 15 day of July, 2003.

Respectfully submitted,



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